

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, and 8-9 were rejected under §102 as being anticipated by Yoshimura. Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the interior side of the flow field channel has a roughness of decades of micrometers. In the method of manufacturing the fuel cell separator of the present invention, the flow field channel on the graphite foil is formed by sandblasting or ultrasonic etching to create a roughness in the range of decades of micrometers. The hydrophobic layer can therefore be better attached by impregnation on the flow field channel.

The Yoshimura reference discloses no feature or characteristic remotely related to the flow field channel having a roughness in the range of decades of micrometers. On the contrary, Yoshimura discloses the base plates 62 and 64 are composed of stainless steel or another metal such as aluminum. There is no disclosure of any type of surface treatment applied to the base plates 62 and 64. Stainless steel and aluminum such as disclosed in the Yoshimura reference for the base plates 62 and 64 are inherently smooth, and would have no features relating to the claimed roughness. Therefore, Claim 1 clearly distinguishes over the Yoshimura reference. Claims 2-4 and 8-9 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1. Therefore, this rejection under §102 should be withdrawn.

Claims 5 and 6 were rejected under §103 as being unpatentable over Yoshimura and further in view of Wilkinson. Even if it were obvious to combine Yoshimura and Wilkinson, Wilkinson is also deficient with respect to disclosing anything remotely similar to the claimed flow field channel having the roughness characteristic. Claims 5 and 6 depend from Claim 1. Therefore, this rejection under §103 should also be withdrawn.

Claim 7 was rejected under §103 as being unpatentable over Yoshimura. Claim 7 depends from Claim 1. Therefore, this rejection under §103 should also be withdrawn.

Based upon the foregoing, Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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